

To slander Musicke any more then once.

Prince. It is the witnesse still of excellencie,
To put a strange face on his owne perfection,
I pray thee sing, and let me woe no more.

Balth. Because you talke of wooing, I will sing,
Since many a wooer doth commence his suit,
To her he thinks not worthy, yet he wooes,
Yet will he sweare he loues.

Prince. Nay pray thee come,
Or if thou wilt hold longer argument,
Doe it in notes.

Balth. Note this before my notes,
Theres not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

Prince. Why these are very crotchets that he speaks,
Note notes forsooth, and nothing.

Bene. Now diuine aire, now is his soule rauisht, is it
not strange that sheeps guts should hale soules out of
mens bodies? well, a horne for my money when all's
done.

The Song.

Sigh no more Ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceiuers euer,
One foote in Sea, and one on shore,
To one thing constant neuer,
Then sigh not so, but let them goe,
And be you blithe and bonnie,
Conuerting all your sounds of woe,
Into hey nonny nony.

Sing no more ditties, sing no moe,
Of dumps so dull and heavy,
The fraud of men were euer so,
Since summer first was leauy,
Then sigh not so, &c.

Prince. By my troth a good song.

Balth. And an ill singer, my Lord.

Prince. Ha, no, no faith, thou singst well enough for a
shift.

Bene. And he had been a dog that should haue howld
thus, they would haue hang'd him, and I pray God his
bad voyce bode no mischief, I had as lief haue heard
the night-rauen, come what plague could haue come af-
ter it.

Prince. Yea marry, dost thou heare Balthasar? I pray
thee get vs some excellent musick: for to morrow night
we would haue it at the Lady Heroes chamber window.

Balth. The best I can, my Lord. Exit Balthasar.

Prince. Do so, farewell. Come hither Leonato, what
was it you told me of to day, that your Niece Beatrice
was in loue with signior Benedicke?

Clau. O I, stalker on, stalker on, the foule fits. I did ne-
uer thinke that Lady would haue loued any man.

Leon. No, nor I neither, but most wonderful, that she
should so dote on Signior Benedicke, whom shee hath in
all outward behauiours seemed euer to abhorre.

Bene. Is't possible? fits the winde in that corner?

Leo. By my troth my Lord, I cannot tell what to
thinke of it, but that she loues him with an iraged affe-
ction, it is past the infinite of thought.

Prince. May be she doth but counterfeit.

Clau. Faith like enough.

Leon. O God! counterfeit? there was neuer counter-
feit of passion, came so neere the life of passion as she dis-
couers it.

Prince. Why what effects of passion shewes she?

Clau. Baite the hooke well, this fish will bite.

Leon. What effects my Lord? shee will fit you, you
heard my daughter tell you how.

Clau. She did indeed.

Prin. How, how I pray you? you amaze me, I would
haue thought her spirit had beene inuincible against all
assaults of affection.

Leo. I would haue sworne it had, my Lord, especially
against Benedicke.

Bene. I should thinke this a gull, but that the white-
bearded fellow speaks it: knauery cannot sure hide
himselfe in such reuerence.

Clau. He hath tane th' infection, hold it vp.

Prince. Hath shee made her affection known to Bene-
dicke?

Leonato. No, and sweares she neuer will, that's her
torment.

Clau. 'Tis true indeed, so your daughter saies: shall
I, saies she, that haue so oft encountred him with scorn,
write to him that I loue him?

Leo. This saies shee now when shee is beginning to
write to him, for shee'll be vp twenty times a night, and
there will she sit in her smocke, till she haue writ a sheet
of paper: my daughter tells vs all.

Clau. Now you talke of a sheet of paper, I remember
a pretty iest your daughter told vs of.

Leon. O when she had writ it, & was reading it out,
she found Benedicke and Beatrice betweene the sheete.

Clau. That.

Leon. O she tore the letter into a thousand halpence,
raild at her self, that she should be so immodest to write
to one that shee knew would flout her: I measure him,
saies she, by my owne spirit, for I should flout him if hee
writ to mee, yea though I loue him, I should.

Clau. Then downe vpon her knees she falls, weeper,
sobs, beates her heart, teares her hayre, praies, curses, O
sweet Benedicke, God giue me patience.

Leon. She doth indeed, my daughter saies so, and she
extasie hath so much overborne her, that my daughter is
sometime afraid she will doe a desperate out-rage to her
selfe, it is very true.

Prince. It were good that Benedicke knew of it by some
other, if she will not discouer it.

Clau. To what end? he would but make a sport of it,
and torment the poore Lady worse.

Prin. And he should, it were an almes to hang him,
shee's an excellent sweet Lady, and (out of all suspicion,)
she is vertuous.

Clau. And she is exceeding wise.

Prince. In euery thing, but in louing Benedicke.

Leon. O my Lord, wisdom and bloud combating in
so tender a body, we haue ten proofes to one, that bloud
hath the victory, I am sorry for her, as I haue iust cause,
being her Vncle, and her Guardian.

Prince. I would shee had bestowed this dotage on
mee, I would haue dast all other respects, and made her
halfe my selfe: I pray you tell Benedicke of it, and heare
what he will say.

Leon. Were it good thinke you?

Clau. Hero thinks surely she wil die, for she saies she
will die, if hee loue her not, and shee will die ere shee
make her loue knowne, and she will die if hee wooe her,
rather than shee will bate one breath of her accustomed
croffenesse.

Prin. She doth well, if she should make tender of her
loue,

loue, 'tis very possible hee'l scorne it, for the man (as you
know all) hath a contemptible spirit.

Clau. He is a very proper man.

Prin. He hath indeed a good outward happinesse.

Clau. 'Fore God, and in my minde very wise.

Prin. He doth indeed shew some sparkes that are like
wit.

Leon. And I take him to be valiant.

Prin. As Heitor; I assure you, and in the managing of
quarrels you may see hee is wife, for either hee auoydes
them with great discretion, or vndertakes them with a
Christian-like feare.

Leo. If hee doe feare God, a must necessarilie keepe
peace, if hee breake the peace, hee ought to enter into a
quarrell with feare and trembling.

Prin. And so will hee doe, for the man doth feare God,
howsoeuer it seemes not in him, by some large ieafts hee
will make: well, I am sorry for your niece, shall we goe
see Benedicke, and tell him of her loue.

Clau. Neuer tell him, my Lord, let her weare it out
with good counsell.

Leo. Nay that's impossible, she may weare her heart
out first.

Prin. Well, we will heare further of it by your daugh-
ter, let it coole the while, I loue Benedicke well, and I
could wish he would modestly examine himselfe, to see
how much he is vnworthy to haue so good a Lady.

Leon. My Lord, will you walke? dinner is ready.

Clau. If he do not doat on her vpon this, I wil neuer
trust my expectation.

Prin. Let there be the same Net spread for her, and
that must your daughter and her gentlewoman carry: the
sport will be, when they hold one an opinion of ano-
thers dotage, and no such matter, that's the Scene that I
would see, which will be meereley a dumbe shew: let vs
send her to call him into dinner. Exit.

Bene. This can be no tricke, the conference was sadly
borne, they haue the truth of this from Hero, they seeme
to pittie the Lady: it seemes her affections haue the full
bent: loue me? why it must be requited: I heare how I
am censur'd, they say I will beare my selfe proudly, if I
perceiue the loue come from her: they say too, that she
will rather die than giue any signe of affection: I did ne-
uer thinke to marry, I must not seeme proud, happy are
they that heare their detractions, and can put them to
mending: they say the Lady is faire, 'tis a truth, I can
beare them witnesse: and vertuous, tis so, I cannot re-
prooue it, and wise, but for louing me, by my troth it is
no addition to her witte, nor no great argument of her
folly; for I will be horribly in loue with her, I may chance
haue some odde quirkes and remnants of witte broken
on mee, because I haue rail'd so long against marriage:

but doth not the appetite alter? a man loues the meat in
his youth, that he cannot indure in his age. Shall quips
and sentences, and these paper bullets of the braine awe
a man from the careere of his humour? No, the world
must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I
did not thinke I should liue till I were married, here comes
Beatrice: by this day, shee's a faire Lady, I doe spie some
markes of loue in her.

Enter Beatrice.

Beat. Against my wil I am sent to bid you come in to
dinner.

Bene. Faire Beatrice, I thanke you for your paines:

Beat. I tooke no more paines for those thankes, then
you take paines to thanke me, if it had been painefull, I
would not haue come.

Bene. You take pleasure then in the message.

Beat. Yea iust so much as you may take vpon a kniues
point, and choake a daw withall: you haue no stomacke
signior, fare you well. Exit.

Bene. Ha, against my will I am sent to bid you come
into dinner: there's a double meaning in that: I tooke
no more paines for those thankes then you tooke paines
to thanke me, that's as much as to say, any paines that I
take for you is as easie as thankes: if I do not take pittie
of her I am a villaine, if I doe not loue her I am a Jew, I
will goe get her picture. Exit.

Actus Tertius.

Enter Hero and two Gentlemen, Margaret, and Vrfula.

Hero. Good Margaret runne thee to the parlour,
There shalt thou finde my Cofin Beatrice,
Proposing with the Prince and Claudio,
Whisper her eare, and tell her I and Vrfula,
Walke in the Orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her, say that thou ouer-heardest vs,
And bid her steale into the pleached bower,
Where honey-suckles ripened by the sunne,
Forbid the sunne to enter: like fauourites,
Made proud by Princes, that aduance their pride,
Against that power that bred it, there will she hide her,
To listen our purpose, this is thy office,
Beare thee well in it, and leaue vs alone.

Marg. Ile make her come I warrant you presently.

Hero. Now Vrfula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley vp and downe,
Our talke must onely be of Benedicke,
When I doe name him, let it be thy part,
To praise him more then euer man did merit,
My talke to thee must be how Benedicke
Is sicke in loue with Beatrice: of this matter,
Is little Cupids crafty arrow made,
That onely wounds by heare-say: now begin,

Enter Beatrice.

For looke where Beatrice like a Lapwing runs
Close by the ground, to heare our conference.

Vrfula. The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden ores the siluer streame,
And greedily deuoure the treacherous baite;
So angle we for Beatrice, who euen now,
Is couched in the wood-bine couerture,
Feare you not my part of the Dialogue.

Her. Then go we neare her that her eare loose nothing,
Of the false sweete baite that we lay for it:
No truly Vrfula, she is too disdainfull,
I know her spirits are as coy and wilde,
As Haggards of the rocke.

Vrfula. But are you sure,

That Benedicke loues Beatrice so intirely?

Her. So saies the Prince, and my new trothed Lord.

Vrfula. And did they bid you tell her of it, Madam?

Her. They did intreate me to acquaint her of it,
But I perswaded them; if they lou'd Benedicke,

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To